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THE BROWNLEE SYSTEM OF CHILD TRAINING



MORAL TRAINING

IN THE

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By

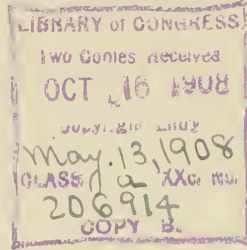
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Mothers' Clubs



May, 1908



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The HOLDEN PATENT BOOK COVER Co.

Springfield -:- Massachusetts

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A PLAN FOR CHILD TRAINING

JANE BROWNLEE, *Principal*

I have been requested to describe minutely a plan for child training used in the Lagrange School, Toledo, Ohio, for the past seven years.

This plan was evolved slowly, and could never have become systematized, as it now is, but for the hearty sympathy of all the teachers of the school, and their never-failing co-operation with the principal in giving a fair trial to ideas suggested. There were many failures at first, and many fine theories were abandoned because a trial proved them impracticable. But failure only served to stimulate us to greater effort, for there was conviction on the part of those interested, that there is a new step to be taken in popular education—that is the recognition and development of the child's higher self; the awakening of the child to his higher powers, teaching him how to develop and use them, that the child may make life happy and successful.

Lagrange is one of more than forty ward schools in Toledo, is a fine building, comparatively new, and is beautified by a surrounding of magnificent old elm trees. There are fourteen large pleasant school rooms and a shop and a kitchen in the basement. The plan of the building is remarkably good because it tends to unification. On each floor the schoolrooms open into large halls with broad staircases, which bring all the pupils together in entering or leaving; an advantage over the old plan with its narrow, separated halls, through which the children pass single file. To encourage still more this spirit of unity, there is a large auditorium with a seating capacity of a thousand where the children are assembled for entertainments of all kinds not only for instruction and pleasure but also to learn how to conduct themselves in public places.

Between six and seven hundred pupils are enrolled, and the material is not more ideal than that of the average public school in any large city. It differs from some schools in this, that the children come from a great variety of homes. Some

are of wealthy parentage, large numbers are from homes of a thrifty class, there are many foreigners including Syrians, Poles, etc., a few negroes, and some poor little ones from "the alley."

• This has been an advantage, for it proves that the higher self of the child can be touched and awakened, independent either of poverty or riches.

The children from the true home can be more easily reached, but the true teacher finds neither heredity nor environment unsurmountable obstacles.

In 1898, a course in psychology deeply impressed me with this truth: Thoughts are *things*. I was at the time teaching an eighth grade in Lagrange school, and was also principal of the building. It occurred to me that a practical application should be made of this truth: that boys and girls should be taught to value their thought power, and to use it in building character. From this thought there gradually evolved a plan for a series of five-minute talks to my own class at the opening of the morning session. The purpose of these little talks was to direct the attention of the pupils to certain truths: that they had the power to think: that they could use the power in any way they chose: that no one could think for them any more than he could eat for them: that their thinking made them, and that, therefore, their character, the kind of persons they were to be, depended solely upon themselves. They were led to see that it would be a great help in character building to take a short time alone each day, if only three or four minutes, and consciously let the mind dwell upon some good thought or lofty ideal.

One day a shy, thoughtful boy said to me, "I like what you've been telling us." "Do you like it well enough to try to live it?" "Yes," was the earnest reply, "I've made a promise to myself not to let a day pass without doing what you have advised, to sit alone and think a good thought." Other members of the class have since told me of the impression made by this, to them, new thought and of its influence upon their lives.

The following year I was relieved of class duties, and could devote my time to all the schools. The spirit in which my own class had received the little talks on thought power made me feel that all the children might be benefited by such instruction. It was put to the test, found practicable, and was gradually worked out into a systematized plan.

The children learned through these simple five-minute talks in the morning that the body is just a little house in which the real child lives. They learned that this body as

their house, is sacred and must be kept pure and clean. They learned why they eat food, and why plenty of sleep is necessary for growing children.

In the same way they learned that the mind is distinct from the body which it controls. That the mind, to be healthy, needs food just as the body does, but its food is quite different, their lessons forming the greater part of it.

Then they learned of the real child dwelling in the body and having the mind for its instrument: how this real self could not grow as it should in an unhealthy body and with an undeveloped mind: that if this real child were growing stronger day by day, it would show it in right thinking, and so the child by watching and controlling this wonderful thought power could grow into a strong, fine character, that not only would make his life happy, but a help to others instead of a hindrance.

Then followed lessons teaching him how to control and develop his thought power. A subject was chosen for the month, and the entire school concentrated upon it, using the first five minutes in the morning. An interesting proof of the power of this united mental action was given by the following experience. This work was independent of the regular school curriculum as planned by the superintendent. But it was finally recognized as a factor in school government, and a revision in the course of study allowed one period, once a month, for talks on ethics, and different subjects were assigned to the different grades. The work under this plan was a failure in our school. We found the periods were too far apart to hold the interest of the children, and the talks so long as to weary them. Only one thought at a time should be brought out, and *there should be as little said by the teacher as possible*, the purpose being to find out what the child thinks and direct his thinking.

The following plan was finally worked out, and has been used satisfactorily for several years in our own school, and for the past two years in Spring school, one of the other Toledo ward schools—namely: To select some word for each month of the year, and get the children to express their thoughts about the subject. The words selected were as follows:

For September	Kindness
October	Cleanliness
November	Obedience
December	Self-Control
January	Courtesy and Cheerfulness
February	Work

March	Honor
April	Honesty, Truthfulness and Clean Language
May and June	Manners, and review of the year

The first subject chosen, "Kindness," is divided into four parts, one for each week in the month. First, kindness to parents, the children's best friends; second, to teacher, next best friend; third, to brothers, sisters, companions and the world in general; fourth, to animals.

To begin; such leading questions are asked by the teacher as, "Who are your best friends?" "Why?" To this there are ready replies by the younger children—"They work for us." "They give us food—clothes—a bed,"—and finally some child will give the highest and best reason, "They love us."

"How can you show your love for them?" They are taught that love manifests itself by kindness, the kind thought, the kind word, the kind deed. So they say, "I can wash the dishes for my mamma." "I can go to the grocery when she tells me to without whining." "I can get my papa's slippers for him when he comes home tired," etc. "Should you do all these things?"

One little girl said to her teacher after a week of the morning talks, "My mamma thinks I'm getting sick." "I can tell you why," said the teacher; "you obey her now and are kind to her." The child laughed and said, "Yes, that's it, I heard her tell my papa I was getting so good she was afraid I was sick."

Second week—"How can you be kind to teacher?" By yielding ready and cheerful obedience to school rules—by trying each day to do their best—by being unselfish and courteous, by keeping neat desks, etc.

In a study hour in one room when the school was very quiet a boy attempting to take something from his desk threw all its contents noisily to the floor. The teacher remarked quietly, "I think you have forgotten the thought for the day." I was in the room at the time, and asked, "What is the thought for the day?" The reply was, "Kindness to classmates." "What has dropping books from a desk to do with that," I inquired. The pupils were called upon to answer, which they did promptly. "It is not kind to disturb us." "An untidy desk does not set a good example." "The inspector may call, and this desk would bring a bad mark for the whole school," etc.

This conversation was kind in spirit and in word on the part of both teacher and pupils, so there was no sting in it

for the offender. He was not made to feel that he had committed a crime, but that he was guilty of a little carelessness which he could and would correct.

This talk of kindness to the teacher is a two-edged sword. A teacher who is expecting kindness from her pupils must feel that equal kindness should return from her to them, so day by day she, too, grows toward *her* highest.

The same plan is used during the third and fourth weeks. The work does not end with the five minutes in the morning, but the children are reminded of it during the day as occasion offers.

The talks for the fourth week are interesting, because the normal child loves animals. The pupils are taught that animals are a part of that one universal life force, which we see manifested all around us in wondrous diversity. They are led to consider the usefulness of creatures, their affection and fidelity; the pain *which can not be expressed* by an animal when abused—as when a boy stones a cat, or a horse beaten when doing all it can; how they add not only to our comfort, but to our pleasure, as the birds with their beauty and songs; their helplessness, which should appeal to the tenderness and protection of the children, and the thought expressed by a second-grade boy, “They’ve got just as good a right to live as we have.”

Often after a heavy rain, young birds are beaten from the nests, and the children carry them tenderly to their teacher, one proof that the little talks have made an impression.

In connection with each subject, appropriate gems are taught. One at a time is written on the blackboard where it remains until each pupil has committed it to memory.

“Little children, you must seek
Rather to be good than wise;
For the thoughts you do not speak
Shine out in your cheeks and eyes.”

“You never can tell what your thoughts will do
In bringing you hate or love;
For thoughts are things, and their airy wings
Are swift as carrier dove.
They follow the law of the universe—
Each thing must create its kind.
And they speed o’er the track to bring you back,
Whatever went out from your mind.”

“There’s nothing so kingly as kindness;
And nothing so royal as truth.”

“Kind hearts are the gardens;
Kind thoughts are the roots;
Kind words are the blossoms
Kind deeds are the fruits.”

“You can not change yesterday, that is clear
Or begin tomorrow until it is here.
So the only thing left for you and for me
Is to make today as sweet as can be.”

During the month in which a word is considered, it must be placed where the eye will frequently rest upon it: in every room it is prettily and conspicuously lettered upon the black-board in colored chalk.

To further attract attention, some of the older boys of Lagrange school made a banner, which was hung in the main hall where it was not only an ornament, but caught the attention at once on entering the building.

A frame, three and a half yards long and three-fourths of a yard wide was made of light wood; over this was stretched burlap of a soft, green shade, tacked on smoothly with bronze-headed nails, which gave an ornamental finish.

Letters, proportioned to the size of the banner, were cut out of stiff, white cardboard, and held in place by brass paper-fasteners. These were easily removed each month to be replaced by the new word. The expense of the banner is trifling, and it has proved very helpful in the work. When this new idea of a banner was planned, letters attached with paper-fasteners—the cost so trifling—it seemed at once that a “*System of Child Training*” had been completely evolved as the name on the banner each month produced a deep impression on teacher, scholar and visitor.

Following kindness, cleanliness is always considered, for the thought is brought out that the kind child will strive to be clean. This subject is divided into two parts—cleanliness of the body, and cleanliness of the mind. Two weeks are devoted to the consideration of each.

Simple hygienic talks are given, for in the average public school there is likely to be a fair percentage of the children who receive little care and no instruction pertaining to the body. For the second part, excellent lessons can be given by the teacher on the importance and value of clean thoughts in building character, which is the real purpose of each life.

Every human being is the sacred thought of God. God gives individuality, which each must develop into character.

The third subject is obedience. Obedience in the home; in the school; to the laws of health; to moral law.



PORTION OF HALL SHOWING BANNER

It seems best to take these three subjects first, and in this order; for if every child were kind, clean and obedient, there would be a fine foundation upon which to build.

After these three, the choice is varied from year to year as the need of the school seems to demand. Here is a suggestive outline:

December with its holidays is apt to be a distracting time for the pupils. Self-control is chosen and used topically.

What is self-control? Should it be cultivated? Why? What is my self-control? How can I cultivate it? If all the members of a family are self-controlled is the home happier? What is the effect of self-control in the school-room? Is it the duty of every one to cultivate self-control?

While the success of this work depends chiefly upon the teacher—upon his or her enthusiasm and depth of character, experience has shown that some subjects are more pleasing to the pupils and more impressive, because having a more manifest bearing upon daily conduct. Self-control is a favorite. The children very quickly give such a definition as, "It means to make yourself mind."

A fine boy, but hot-tempered and lacking in self-control, was one day placing the letters of the new word for the month. He had the banner on the floor and was arranging the letters preparatory to fastening them. A younger boy felt entitled to the privilege of "bossing the job" because his father had contributed the letters. He gave orders and expressed his opinion quite freely, and three times the older boy stopped his work and looked up at him. The teacher watched to see the outcome, but said nothing. Finally the younger boy, seeing that his advice was not taken, walked away. The older boy looked at the teacher in an amused way and said. "That self-control business is a pretty good thing for me. Twice I thought I'd lick that kid for being so bossy, but I said to myself, 'Thomas, hold on to yourself. Remember self-control.'"

A teacher from a neighboring city, visiting Lagrange school, was favorably impressed with the plan for developing thought, and decided to give it a trial in her own school. She explained the plan to her pupils, self-control was chosen for a beginning, and the word was printed in large letters upon the blackboard just behind the teacher's desk. The little morning talks imbued the children with the spirit of the word, and all was working well when the teacher became ill and a substitute was placed in charge of the school. The new teacher proved to be ill-tempered and wholly lacking in self-control. The days were spent in scolding and nagging disorderly pupils, the kind which such a school atmosphere produces.

One day just before the close of an unusually trying session, a quiet little boy raised his hand. "What do you want?" crossly snapped the teacher. "Look behind you," said the child pointing to "Self-control" on the blackboard. One can not help wondering about the effect of such a rebuke.

A child whose misfortune it was to have a teacher of the same kind as the substitute, said to her mother: "I get so tired of her yap, yapping all day long. She scolds all the time and tells the boys how bad they are, and they just like to see her get mad. You see her mother never taught her to control herself when she was little." What confidence or respect can such a teacher win?

Cheerfulness follows self-control, and is developed by topics.

Define. (The children should be asked for original definitions.) Can cheerfulness be cultivated? Should it be cultivated? Effect of your cheerfulness in the home? In the school? Should it be a duty or a pleasure or both to cultivate cheerfulness? When is it easy to be cheerful? When difficult? Which will make you a strong boy or girl—to be cheerful when it is easy, or when difficult? By cultivating cheerfulness can you thus express your love for your parents and your teacher?

Then gems on cheerfulness, such as:

"'Tis easy enough to be pleasant
When life flows along like a song:
But the man worth while is the one that will smile
When everything goes dead wrong.
For the test of the heart is trouble,
And it always comes with the years,
And the smile that is worth the praise of earth,
Is the smile that comes through tears."

A very practical and interesting subject is work.

Is work necessary? Make a list of the different kinds of work that you see going on about you, or of which you have heard or read. If everybody in the world refused to work, what then? Is it the duty of everyone to work?

All necessary work is honorable. Not *kind* of work, but quality, counts. No work too humble to be scorned or neglected. Work well done brings happiness. Much of your success and joy in life will depend upon the spirit in which your work is done. Does your work in school bear any relation to your work after you have left school? One of the world's greatest needs is honest, cheerful workers. A present duty neglected never brings future success.

Pupils are encouraged to look for quotations appropriate to the subject under consideration. Here are a few selected from many handed in upon the subject of work:

"No one can rise who slights his work."

"Honest work is the only sure thing."

"Our grand business in life is not to *see* what lies dimly at a distance, but to *do* what lies clearly at hand."

"Nothing is impossible to industry."

"Work is an educator of character."

"Nothing is so injurious as unoccupied time."

"Observe, then, all wise work is mainly threefold in character: it is honest, useful and cheerful."

"The modern majesty consists in work. What a man can do is his greatest ornament, and he always consults his dignity by doing it."

"Pleasure comes through toil and not by self-indulgence. When one gets to love work, his life is a happy one."

The subject "honor" follows work.

What is honor? Should honor be cultivated? Does it help to make a fine character or a weak one? What is character? What is reputation? Which would you rather have—a fine reputation or a fine character? How can you build character? How can you develop honor in your home relations? How in school? Do you think you must work for honor, or will it develop easily and without effort on your part? Do you think the things in life really worth having are gained with or without striving? Do you think the attainment of honor is desirable? Does it pay in business relations? How hard are you willing to work that you may possess honor?

Many incidents might be related showing the influence of this subject upon the spirit of the school, but I will give only two. In passing along the hall one day, I glanced into the room occupied by pupils of the first grade, chiefly beginners. The order was so excellent, every little child busily occupied with his own task, that I stepped inside to express my pleasure and approval. The teacher was absent from the room, but shortly returned. I told her what I had seen, and praised the children. The teacher then asked them to tell why they were busy and orderly when she was out of the room; and all the little hands came up, and the answer was given, "We're trying to be honor boys and girls."

One morning just before the opening of the session, a teacher of a sixth grade was talking over a little matter of business with me in the hall. When the bell rang we had not quite finished our conversation. A pupil seeing the teacher thus engaged, closed the schoolroom door. Presently we heard the sound of some confusion in the room, and thinking it might be disorder, the teacher gently opened the door.

Our distrust met a merited rebuke. A boy stood before the school, leading in the Lord's prayer. The pupils had seen their teacher in the hall, and were opening the school themselves. This is by no means an isolated case.

A very practical application of this subject, honor, may be made in the care of school property. Children should be taught that every manufactured article is produced at a cost of labor, time and money, and should be used with care, whether the article belongs to them or to another. If text-books are furnished free of cost, pupils must understand that while free of cost to them, they are not so to the tax-payers, and they must show appreciation by a desire to pass them on to their successors in good condition. The books may be well and pleasantly cared for in some such way as this: Let the class elect two or three of its members to serve a month or a shorter term, if necessary, to give all the pupils an opportunity to share in this work. These may be called "Room Librarians" and wear a badge of office; for children like some adults love some emblem of authority. Each one can take charge of the repairs needed to the books on, say 2 or 3 rows of desks, and admonish those handling them with soiled hands. It shall be the work of the librarians to inspect the books during the time they serve, and it will give them a pleasant feeling of independence and responsibility to be allowed to make their own plans of procedure. For example, they might remain after school one afternoon to examine and repair all the readers, another afternoon the arithmetics, and so on. They should be supplied with mending material for fastening loose leaves and repairing torn leaves, which can be purchased at a very small cost, and they should insist upon every book being covered. In the large cities both mending material and the book covers are furnished by the board of education, and this could be done in small towns and even villages, if it were presented to the authorities from the standpoint of economy. If a book is being destructively used, the case must at once be reported to the teacher for investigation. Destructiveness in childhood is chiefly due to thoughtlessness, and unless corrected will lead to shiftlessness. Such a child can not fail to be helped by being called upon to examine many books; to see the results of caretaking, or to repair the damage caused by carelessness. Landlords might cease to be victims to a class of tenants who say, "We don't care anything about this house, you know; it's only rented," if children were given such teaching in school.

Regard for the rights of others is a subject fruitful in good results.

What are the rights of parents? To your love, courtesy and respect; to your ready and cheerful obedience; to your helpfulness (every child should have some work to do in the home, that will add to the comfort of all); to the care of your clothing that additional burdens may not be laid upon your parents.

Rights of teacher? To your courtesy and respect; to your cheerful and ready obedience; to your co-operation in making the school the best possible; to expect honor and honesty in the preparation of daily work; that you be punctual and regular in attendance; to your pleasant, kind, obliging and helpful ways. By this attitude toward the teacher, the pupils are building character of the right sort, and in the end will receive more than they give.

Rights of brothers, sisters, companions, neighbors and strangers in public places may be worked out in the same way as may the rights of animals.

Courtesy is a very good subject, for children are often rude, not intentionally, but through lack of instruction. It may be divided as follows:

Courtesy in the home to father, mother, brothers, sisters and servants; in the school, to teacher, classmates and janitor; to companions, to strangers in public places.

At the close of a month during which this subject was considered, the pupils were requested to make some rules of conduct, and many and good ones were given. Among the younger children two rules, variously expressed, showed the need of this instruction—"Don't sass your mother." "Don't stay with your mother when a lady comes to see her. They don't want you to hear what they're talking about."

The last month of the year may be spent in reviewing the work to learn what impression has been made upon the pupils.

"No man can instruct others in anything. He can, however, awaken thought and arouse impulse. And this is all there is of teaching—to supply an atmosphere in which thought can germinate and grow."

But only half is done when children are made conscious of this wonderful thought power: they must be given a channel through which to direct and use it.

They love to have a part in the affairs of grown-up people, to be taken seriously, and to have opinions on some questions recognized and considered. It is a well-known fact, that a child who hears ways and means seriously discussed in his home, is far more capable and has at least five times the chance of becoming a valuable, independent citizen than a child reared in an institution has.

HOW LAGRANGE CITY GREW

To meet this need, then, it was decided some years ago to give the pupils of Lagrange school a part, a real part, in the management of the school. The idea is not original, it has often been used, sometimes successfully carried out, and sometimes ending in failure. Many years ago, pupil government was introduced into the schools of one of the largest cities in our country, and for a time worked well. Later it was abandoned. It was found that pupils were resorting to corrupt political methods, such as accepting bribes for votes. Children, as well as adults, need preparation to appreciate and use the right of suffrage.

One who watched the work of Lagrange school along this line says: "At first I was skeptical about the municipal idea. But by watching its working out I found that the moral training through your system, taught every day for a few moments, eliminated from an election the evil effects of the strife, and that it was simply a proof of the benefit of the training received, so I changed my opinion."

From the *Toledo Times-Bee*: "The municipal government of the school is the best known of any of its features because the most spectacular, but it is merely a detail, planned to aid in the building of character, and to give the children another opportunity for the working out of their good thoughts."

It may be well to say that the Lagrange pupils do not govern the school. The teachers believe they are too lacking in experience and judgment to be self-governing. The idea is to develop a spirit of co-operation, and to give them, so far as they are qualified, certain duties to a faithful performance of which they are rigidly held.

After trying scheme after scheme, many of which proved failures, the following simple plan evolved, and has worked admirably for years.

The school is considered a city, each room being a ward. In this school of fourteen rooms, the pupils of eight rooms, fifth to eighth grades inclusive, form the voting population, the six remaining schools, the non-voting. Only pupils of the seventh and eighth grades are eligible to office, and the mayor must be a member of the highest or graduating class.

Two elections are held each year, the successful candidate serving during a term of five months.

One week preceding the election, a nominating convention is held, and is in charge of pupils who have been previously instructed how to conduct a meeting according to parliamentary law. This they take great pride in doing, and the other

pupils, being deeply interested, soon learn from them, and are thus almost unconsciously acquiring knowledge which will be useful to them as citizens or voters.

The nominating speeches are often of so high an order, having so much of merit, as to astonish older persons who hear them. It only proves what wonderful latent possibilities are awaiting opportunities for development in these little people. None are more surprised, perhaps, than the teachers, for one rule of the election, rigidly adhered to, is that they give no assistance in the preparation of these speeches, which they hear for the first time from the platform.

Former teachers of the candidate are often called upon for letters testifying in regard to the character of the pupil, his honesty, industry and fitness for office. These are read from the platform in connection with the nominating speech, and the listening voters are impressed by the fact that the back record counts in running for office. One boy, who had been very troublesome, unaccountably changed after attending a convention, to the surprise and relief of his teacher. Later it was learned that he had decided he would one day like to be mayor of Lagrange, and was making his record.

The late Golden Rule Mayor of Toledo, Mr. S. M. Jones, was often present at these conventions, being interested in the experiment. On one occasion he said in a speech to the voters, that it was the best conducted convention he had ever attended.

A week intervenes between the convention and the election. During this time the pupils are given the freedom of the halls, where they meet to discuss the merits of their favorite candidates. Ill-feeling is prevented by the following which is the law of the election: **Say all the good you can about your candidate—not one word against his opponent.** *This law is strictly enforced.*

Right here the pupils are taught the meaning of positive and negative thinking—the positive being the constructive force, the negative, the destructive. They must build up the reputation of candidates, not tear down.

Kind speaking is positive; ill speaking is negative. An election gives a fine opportunity for a practical application of this knowledge, of which the voters are expected to take advantage.

During the electioneering week, the pupils take great delight in decorating the halls with cards and banners of all kinds, setting forth the merits of the different candidates. Many of these placards show great wit, originality and artistic

ability. The work is done after sessions, and pupils often devote an entire Saturday to helping candidates in this way.

The election is a time of intense excitement, stimulating mental action by developing opinions upon a variety of questions that arise. While the teachers keep in the background, they are quite as interested as the pupils, are always ready to advise when asked to do so, but are careful never to express an opinion that might turn votes. They teach the voters how to analyze the character of a candidate in regard to his fitness for office, not to criticise him.

A pupil who had the reputation of being the best boy in school was elected mayor by an overwhelming majority on this merit alone. He proved to be wholly inadequate, because of a total lack of executive ability. Some pupils were once heard discussing the city's condition, and one remarked, "I tell you what it is, we need something more than mere goodness," to which all agreed. Though they could not better express it, they had learned that the goodness of their mayor was negative in quality, and that the positive kind is necessary for accomplishing results.

The teachers also prepare candidates to meet defeat bravely, by reminding them to keep ever in mind that there can be only one successful candidate for each office. More than once it has happened that two intimate friends have been nominated for the same office without in the least affecting their friendship when all was over and one had suffered defeat.

When the great day arrives the voters assemble in the auditorium, and are called to order by the chairman pro tem. He opens with, "Before proceeding to the regular order of business, which is the election of officers for Lagrange City, are there any motions or remarks?" In response, certain pupils, previously instructed, make motions which are either promptly seconded or opposed or amended.

The chairman, having called for further motions and hearing none, then says, "It will be necessary to have tellers. What is your pleasure? Will you elect or shall the chair appoint?" In order to save time the motion carries that the chair appoint. This being done, the tellers take their places on the platform, and the balloting begins.

All the pupils have been previously instructed how to keep tally, but are reminded of the rule that no demonstration must be made until the result is announced from the platform. These announcements call forth the wildest applause, and shouts of "Speech! Speech!" Then the winner goes forward to the platform, and briefly expresses his thanks for the

honor bestowed upon him by his fellow citizens, and gives promise of fidelity in office.

The following is from the Toledo *News-Bee* in regard to these speeches: "Here's one thing gleaned from the story of the election of officers by this school government, this miniature republic or municipality. The boy who was elected mayor said in his speech of acceptance: 'I am sure that I appreciate and understand the honor you have just conferred



EDWARD BUERKE, *Mayor*

"I will do the best I can for all the people of Lagrange City, all the time."

upon me. It means that I am to do the best I can for all the people of Lagrange City all the time. I shall try to do so.' This is an ideal speech of acceptance. We can commend it to the politicians of Toledo. That boy didn't say he was to do all he could for the Democratic or Republican party, but for

all the *people* of Lagrange City. The boy who was elected treasurer said: 'When I was nominated, my nominator said many good things of me. I will try to come up to all that was said.'"

At one of the elections, a girl was made mayor by an overwhelming majority. She had won the love and confidence of the pupils by her kindness and gentleness in a minor office. She said later in speaking about her election: "When they



HELEN SCHULTE, *Mayor*

"When they talked of me for Mayor, I said to myself, 'If I am elected, I will think always of the work and never of myself.'"

talked of me for mayor, I said to myself, 'If they elect me, I will think always of the work and never of myself.' Truly, a high sentiment for a child in her fourteenth year, and she lived up to all she had promised for herself.

Four officers are elected—mayor, sanitary chief, treasurer and city clerk. In addition to these, inspectors are appointed by the sanitary chief. There are seven in all, each having charge of two wards. All these officers form a council and at stated times meet with the principal to receive instruction in parliamentary law and to confer with her in regard to the care of the building, making such suggestions as from their observation would improve the condition of the city. They understand perfectly that they are not expected to govern the school but in a spirit of co-operation to do all in their power to further its best interests. In almost all cases their suggestions show both wisdom and common sense. These are noted by the principal and reported to the teachers to be acted upon. This dignifies the work of the officers and stimulates them to greater effort. The plan eliminates anything in the nature of courts, or police supervision. Children are neither experienced nor wise enough to sit in judgment on the acts of their companions. To encourage such an attempt on their part is a grave mistake, and has caused the failure of many an experiment along this line in a public school.

Once a month all the pupils assemble in the auditorium for a citizens' meeting. Reports are read by the officers, suggestions leading to improvements are received from the citizens, and if there are complaints against those in office they are entered at these meetings. In the beginning of the work it was not uncommon to hear complaints to the effect that officers were "sassy" or "bossed," etc. These are not heard now, showing that the officers have a better idea of what is expected of them.

The mayor presides at the citizens' meetings, and at all entertainments of any kind held in the auditorium. He has a general supervision of building and grounds. He takes charge of the entrances, where he stations pupils to remind the children to clean their feet before entering and to pass quietly through the halls. He visits basement and playground, mingling with the citizens, who are proud of the mayor they have elected, and show him great respect. It is interesting to watch the effect of this attitude upon the officer—it brings out the best in the boy or girl.

This office demands self-sacrifice. In order to perform its duties, the mayor must prepare much of his school work at home, which means a cutting down of his hours for recreation during the five months he serves.

The duties of the city clerk are the lightest. He takes the minutes of the meetings, which he works into a careful report to be read at the following meeting.

The treasurer, of course, has charge of all funds, which in the main are derived from two sources. Once each year an entertainment is given in the building, the proceeds of which are used for school decoration. The treasurer deposits this money in one of the city banks, and pays his bills by checks. He thus learns something of actual business methods. The other source of revenue is "Penny Day." One day in the week is given this name, because citizens so desiring, contribute a penny, the money to be used for the purchase of flowers for pupils who are ill. The treasurer appoints children, generally from the lower grades, to stand at certain places in the halls with small boxes into which pennies may be dropped. Children are urged to *earn* what they give, because, "The gift without the giver is bare." The purpose is to develop unselfishness, and sympathy for the suffering.

The pennies are collected on Thursday, and on Friday morning the treasurer visits the different rooms to ascertain the number of pupils who are ill. At noon he purchases his flowers, and in the afternoon distributes them. Perhaps only one flower is sent with a note of sympathy, but it brings great pleasure to the recipient as little notes of thanks testify.

The duties of the sanitary chief are more onerous, and his office is regarded next to the mayor's in importance. The inspectors, whom he appoints, make reports of the condition of their wards, and from these the chief compiles a general report to be read at the citizens' meeting. This is listened to eagerly by the citizens, who are highly pleased if their ward is commended.

A chief once said, "I have this report to read, 'Ward Seven is in the worst condition of any in the city.' I hate to do it, but the inspector reports that he has spoken to the pupils again and again about the appearance of the room, and it makes no difference; so I feel it is the only thing left to do." The chagrin of the citizens of Ward Seven may be imagined, but there was civic house cleaning, followed by a good report at the next meeting.

The chief must also see that building and grounds are kept free of papers or debris of any kind. This work he assigns to the non-voters, that they may feel they, too, have a part in the government.

A newly-elected sanitary chief in the zeal of office said, "I'll break their backs if they don't keep that basement in better shape." He was reminded that "breaking backs" was out of harmony with the spirit of a city whose citizens were urged to do right because it is right, and not through fear of punishment. Later he reported, "Some boy kept spitting on



SANITARY OFFICER AND HIS SQUAD

These children see that the grounds are free from papers

the basement stairs, and I couldn't find out for a long time who it was. But today I caught him. I asked him if he knew how dangerous it was, and he said he didn't. Then I told him what I'd read, and how many street car conductors had died before spitting in the cars was forbidden. I gave him a whole lot of facts. He said he had always spit where he felt like it, no matter where he was, but that he'd quit it."

The chief was commended for having taken the better way, and was reminded that he had made a friend instead of an enemy, as would have been the result had he followed his first intention of "breaking backs."

The inspectors always take the citizens unawares. Whenever one of these officers has a few minutes to spare during a study hour, he slips quietly out of his room to visit his wards. He notes the condition of floor, desk, cloakroom, and the general appearance of the citizens in regard to cleanliness and neatness, and reports on each item, excellent, good, fair or poor. Blank reports are furnished, which he need only fill in with initial letters.

The inspectors, by permission of the teacher, often make little speeches to the citizens of their wards, either in commendation or disapproval. In a small way it is the beginning of public speaking, the ward being a part of their little world, and is quite as great a strain upon their nerves as for some men to speak before their fellow citizens.

It has always been an unwritten law that only those pupils are eligible for office whose record, past and present, is good. A few exceptions have, however, been made.

A boy was once nominated who resembled the little girl in the rhyme:

"When she was good, she was very, very good,
And when she was bad she was horrid."

He was surprised and deeply touched by this expression of affection on the part of his classmates, and said he knew he had his record to make and that he'd make it. He did remarkably well in office until within a short time of the close of the school year. Then one day he said to his teacher in a confidential whisper, "Do you know anything I can take? Gee! but I'm getting bad." His teacher told him that a strong exercise of will power would be the best medicine, and would surely tide him over the remaining ten days. He acted on the advice, put forth the effort, and went out of office with a record of which he was justly proud.

Before beginning the municipal government of the school, the pupils may be prepared by short talks on the following topics:

What is meant by government? Is government necessary? Why? In the home? Why? In the school? Why? In the city? In the state? In the nation? Do you believe in government? Are you willing to give loyal support to home and school government, believing that by so doing you are preparing yourself for useful and loyal citizenship?

There is always an orchestra for this miniature city to furnish music for public meetings. Until the past year the leader has been a pupil, but at present an orchestra numbering thirty members is in charge of two of the teachers, who unselfishly give their time out of school hours to this work. One of the teachers said, "When we organized the orchestra I thought it meant drudgery for me, but nothing that I have ever done has brought me such real happiness. The children are so appreciative and obedient that it is a pleasure to work with them, and I have learned much that could never have come to me in any other way." She had verified the truth—we never give in unselfishness without receiving many fold.

Some questions naturally present themselves in regard to the effects of this plan, and the results.

With all that is required in the average public school when is time found for this additional work?

Chiefly after regular sessions, but it does not take so much time as would at first appear. Only the officers are instructed in parliamentary law, which they learn very readily. Doing things in order seems to appeal to them, and they desire knowledge, which is the greatest incentive to acquiring it. The pupils soon learn from seeing the officers conduct the meetings, and each year the work of instructing becomes less difficult. A teacher unwilling to give a part of his or her own time to the work should not undertake it.

Does not the excitement attendant upon the election interfere with the regular work?

The following is from a Toledo paper: "The teachers do not experience any difficulty in controlling their classes during election, this fact having been obtained from an interview with several. Moreover, the teachers assert that in no way are the studies slighted, but that full instruction is given in each study as prescribed. On the other hand, the advantages to be derived are of sufficient importance to warrant the continuation of the system."

What is the effect of this training upon the pupils?

It does not claim to make saints: heredity and environment are always strong factors. But the majority of the pupils so governed are kind and obedient; listen to reason when a "bad day" comes their way just as it does with some

older people; are ready to ask pardon when they see they have been at fault; though a forced apology is never permitted, the effect tending to develop hypocrisy. But this is true: they understand that kindness, cleanliness, obedience, self-control, etc., are worth cultivating because they help toward the building of a strong character. Like older people, they may not live up to the best they know, but they *do know*.

The marking system being abolished, how do they compare when brought into competition with pupils who work for marks?

Here is an answer from Mr. William Sanger, one of the teachers in the Toledo central high school: "I receive students from seventeen different grammar schools in the city. I have always made comparisons of the work of these classes, and from these comparisons I have always found the students of Lagrange school doing good work, and very frequently have found that they were doing the best work in the class. As a rule, they show a willingness to work, and to do the best they can. Their peculiar training tends to develop a wholesome spirit."

It must be explained that the marking system is abolished, that is for daily work, though important tests are graded. Pupils are taught that marks are false incentives; that lessons well prepared develop the mind, and that the reward for mental effort is in the mental growth and control, and not in marks which too often are unjust estimates.

A boy once said to his teacher: "This has been the happiest year of my life. I have never been strong, and some days I can't work. When the teacher listened to what I said, or rather couldn't say, on one of my bad days, and I knew her pencil would come down with a zero for me, it made me nervous and mad. But this year, the days I couldn't work I've just listened to the others, and when I've felt well I've worked to make up, and I never learned so much in a year before."

It is not difficult to make pupils feel that all false incentives are childish and unworthy.

At one time the marching was not satisfactory, and to bring it up to a higher standard, I offered to award a banner to the school that marched best. After the first trial, a pupil in the most advanced grade said he did not understand why a banner was offered as a reward for good marching to a school that was taught to despise false incentives. He thought pupils should march well because it is right and not for a banner. This was reported to me, and in order to learn the sentiment of the other pupils, I gave the four highest classes this question

to debate: "Should a banner be given as a reward for good marching?"

It resulted in a complete overthrow of the banner, which was a merited rebuke to me for having, through force of habit, attempted to use a false incentive.

A teacher of one of the classes jotted down the following points as they were made:

Many of the pupils thought that having a banner would create ill feeling. One pupil thought that after the banner was presented, other schools would stop trying. A girl said she would be satisfied if principal and teachers acted as judges, for she thought pupils would be influenced in their decisions. Several thought the banner would not be fair, for only the higher grades would ever have it. This must be expected because they had had the greatest number of years of practice, while some of the lower grades, on the ground of effort, might be equally deserving. Then some one suggested that the judges should take into consideration effort, improvement, etc., and give the banner where it belonged. One of the older pupils then said that no pupils could be so discriminating (or words to that effect).

Then the pupils decided that there were too many things to be taken into account to make it possible to judge fairly, and a vote being taken, thirty-five out of thirty-eight members of the class were opposed to the banner as a false incentive. I had, however, one loyal supporter. He said I must have had some reason for offering the banner, and until he heard from me he would cast his vote in the affirmative.

An attack was once made in a Toledo paper upon the Lagrange system. Among other things the writer said: "The pupils should be filled with book-learning for ten full months of the year, and trust to luck for politics later."

Two Lagrange graduates, now students of the Ohio University, replied to the article, closing as follows: "If one could but visit the Lagrange school and see how careful the pupils are to obey all the laws and orders, he would be driven to the conclusion that these little citizens of Lagrange City obey their laws to a far greater extent than do the people obey the laws of city, state and nation. We believe that if the system did nothing more than to teach reverence for law and order, it would have sufficient merit to warrant its continuance. We fully advocate and support the Lagrange system, because the pupils during the formative period of their lives are taught the elements of true politics, thereby laying the foundation for future activity and usefulness, as members of the body politic; because they are imbued with the spirit of reverence for law

and order; because practice is afforded in public speaking, a knowledge of which in a representative government is of the highest utility; and, lastly, because this system, being made a part of the instruction furnished the pupils, is a step toward the idea of true education—for that education is best which makes its possessor of the greatest service as a member of society."

We have boys and girls in the same school, and they must meet and talk together. What shall they talk about? Here are matters of mutual interest, furnishing wholesome topics for discussion. Boys are growing up with the idea that girls can take part in municipal affairs without becoming masculine. They have shown that they can make excellent nominating speeches for these same boys, and can capably and faithfully discharge the duties of an office. Pupils are learning to work together harmoniously, to co-operate, and that is the foundation principle of human society, which all must learn and apply before there can be universal happiness.

When we think of the millions of children to be trained in citizenship, the problem becomes a serious one. The public school has hitherto considered two parts of child nature—the mental and the physical; it must now give earnest attention to the third—the moral—if we are to have the all-round developed American citizen.

The wide-spread talk of "tainted money," and the exposure of iniquity in high places, give promise of better things. The day is coming when a man will be valued for what he is, and not for what he has. The question will not alone be how to get money, but how to get money honestly.

The children of today must be prepared to meet this demand for integrity in business; they must be taught how to develop true character that all mankind may rise toward a higher plain.

To whom shall the children look for this preparation? To their guardians—the parents and the teachers. But too often the parents fail in their duty to the child, and in such cases the burden must be borne almost wholly by the teacher. Pity the child when both parents and teacher fail him.

Doctor Oppenheim says: "There is not enough of conviction in the minds of parents and teachers that the responsibilities of the children's acts, either good or bad, rests upon their older shoulders; that the final outcome of these children's lives depends almost entirely upon the influence, the nutrition, the environment, which the authority of the parents and teachers provide."

A realization of this truth is the first step in the direction of helping the child. No one can give to another knowledge which he himself does not possess. Only the parent or teacher awake to his or her own higher self can lead the child into a knowledge of himself as spirit, and having a mind and a body for his servants.

More than eighty years ago, Frederick Froebel said: "There exists no other energy but that of thought." And further back the Bible states, "As a man thinketh in his own heart, so is he."

Here, then is the key.

Those who deal with children should watch their own thinking most carefully, for children, being sensitive and intuitive, are strongly influenced by the thoughts of those around them.

The following is from *Moral Education* by Rev. Philip S. Moxom, D.D.:

"We are all agreed in loyally supporting our public school system. It is the creation of a free, self-governing people. The responsibility for it, the merit of its success, or the blame for its failure rests on us—the people. What is the end and aim of that system? To train thinkers? It certainly is a necessary part of education to be able to think alertly and effectively on all questions that concern us as human beings. Is it to train workers? A very important part of education is ability to do skilfully whatever task is allotted to us in life. But neither answer alone is satisfactory nor are both together adequate. The main end of our school system I understand to be, to make men and women who shall be good citizens and useful members of society in all the relations proper to mankind. It is to give to youth intelligence, skill, initiative self-reliance and self-control as responsible moral beings. The culture which is needed most is that which produces a well-trained mind, a healthy and responsive body, and a sound character. Said a principal of a school to me recently, 'I say to my teachers that nine-tenths of our work is moral.' Did she go too far? No; for the moral enters into the whole discipline of the true and adequate education."

"It is a greater and more difficult thing to live, in the true, deep sense, than it is to get a living. Children must be made to feel and then to see that honesty is better than brilliancy, that integrity is worth more than riches, that good character is a prize valuable beyond the power of all material means to measure. If our schools do not train children for upright manhood and pure womanhood, they fail of their highest utility. I close with the expression of my belief that we need

to lessen the details of our curriculum, and increase the means and opportunities for inculcating truthfulness, honor, reverence, purity and uprightness. A clever intellect without a tender conscience makes a Mephistopheles. We are seeking to make men and women who shall know their duty in the world, and have the will to do it. That is an end to call forth our deepest wisdom and our strongest endeavors. On the achievement of that end depends the soundness and permanent prosperity of the nation."

What do these words of the greatest teacher the world has ever known mean to parents and teachers?

"And whoso offendeth one of these little ones, it were better for him that a mill stone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."



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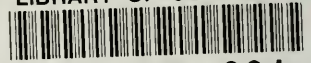




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